



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Earned Media

Since our last report, FTF has distributed one statewide new release regarding the receipt of federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to support the piloting of our Quality Improvement and Rating System, training on the early learning guidelines, and development of and training on the infant and toddler guidelines. Our grantees have also done outreach to media organizations about the FTF-funded services they provide. These efforts resulted in 12 positive stories about FTF running in various media.

NOTE: A second state wide release was distributed on January 13 describing loan repayment and incentives strategies in nine regions aimed at recruiting therapists to underserved areas. The impact of that release was not known by the time materials were being prepared for this update.

Community Outreach

Since our last report, Community Outreach staff have participated in 85 more events or presentations with almost 11,000 participants. As a result, more than 900 people have signed up to be Champions for Kids, meaning they have agreed to take a specific action or actions to help spread the word about the importance of early childhood.

In addition, staff have been working to set up meetings with legislators to either introduce them to First Things First and to build awareness among policymakers of the importance of early childhood, or – in the case of existing policymakers – to update them on FTF activities in their districts. In a few short weeks, regional council members or staff met with Rep. Steve Court (R-18), Rep. Rick Gray (R-9), and Rep. Andy Tobin (R-1).

Advertising

Although FTF's spring media flight does not begin until mid-February, you may see new billboards going up in various parts of the state. Several of these are along Interstate 10 and Interstate 17, or at major intersections, such as Indian School Road and Central Avenue in Phoenix. These billboards were free and are possible because, when our contract for a billboard ends, the company that owns the board often

keeps the vinyl with our ad on it then uses it on other billboards elsewhere that they have not sold. Billboard companies often reuse good vinyls instead of having a blank board, when they have a gap in paid placements. This is the benefit of having beautiful creative with a message that people believe in. In addition, many of the purchased billboards have remained up – even though we are no longer paying for them – because the company has not yet sold that space to another organization. Both of these activities are referred to as added value.

Social Media

First Things First has almost 1,600 fans on Facebook and 60 followers on Twitter.

Communications and Government Affairs Committee

In August, the Board approved the charter for a standing committee to monitor implementation of FTF's strategic communications plan. The committee's first meeting is scheduled for January 21.

Staffing

The Communications Division is pleased to welcome two new members of our team. Mike Grady, an accomplished playwright and former journalist, joins FTF as our staff writer. He is excited about using his skills to help tell the FTF story. Holley Mulholland joins us as an Administrative Assistant supporting the work of community outreach. A former Child Protective Service worker in Wyoming, Holley is excited to now be working in prevention and early intervention.

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